1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP 18 Mbundu FP 18

perhaps in Ndulu. In Ngendo the Men's Club had taken over the rocks just behind the headman's household for its meeting-place, but the meetings were only occasional and there was no common meal.

The Village Plan

To speak of the plan of an Umbundu village may seem a contradiction in terms, so haphazard seems the relation of houses, gardens, &c., to each other. Some houses are circular, but the majority are more nearly rectangular in shape. There is a palisade of hardwood sticks surrounding all the village except that side of the headman's household which is adjacent to the rocks used for a club-house. The headman had not bothered to keep up his own part of the fence since his only garden was a small tobacco plot fenced in by itself. The village is itself divided up by the palisades which shut off one compound from another, each compound containing the houses of from one to three households. Between the palisades are paths which lead on to the dancing floor and out of the village. In the village of Sekulu Sikilile there were twenty-five households with thirty-two houses in all. Each house (*onjo*) had its own granary (*osila*), and small chicken-coop built on stilts, and of all the houses only six had separate kitchens (*ocimo*). Nearly every household had separate pens for the pigs, goats, and sheep for the night. At one side of the headman's compound there was a common corral for the nine cattle which the villagers owned. Only the headman had a spirit-hut (*etambo*), used also for a storehouse, for entertaining a guest, and for his own bedroom should he sleep apart from his wives. Within the several compounds were small gardens of tobacco and of maize and beans, and just outside the village were two separate tobacco gardens. Just a few paces to the west was a small patch of wheat belonging to a man in the smallest ward. There was one household of two houses quite outside the palisades appropriately belonging to a man named *Kulika* (meaning 'Being-alone'). The water-holes and pounding rocks where meal was ground were between the several units of the village and were used in common. The fields were off to the east at from thirty minutes' to an hour's walk. The two smaller wards of Ciyanda and Kanjengo were so small that they were like two or three compounds by themselves. The former had six households with eight houses, and the latter

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FF

PLATE IV

341

a. A new village (*itula*) near Elende

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Photo. M. W. Ennis

b. A granary (*onila*), also used as a guest house

[facing p. 33]

2: McCulloch E-4 (1945-51) 1952 FP13 Mbundu FP13

Ovimbundu women braid their hair neatly in strands across their foreheads, and decorate the braids with small blue and white trade beads.(1) 302

MAIN FEATURES OF ECONOMY

AGRICULTURE(2)

Main crops are maize and several kinds of beans. Subsidiary crops include: sorghum, kaffir corn, emmer wheat, manioc, peanuts, squash, sweet potatoes, garden vegetables, a little rice, cotton, sugar-cane and tobacco. Fruit-trees such as the papaya, banana, loquat, tangerine, lemon, peach and apple, are increasingly cultivated, and, to some extent, coffee. Upland fields for the principal crops of maize and beans are cultivated during the rainy season, and, to piece out the harvest, river gardens for secondary crops are used in the dry season. 241

The principal corn-gardens

Traditionally men work with their wives in the heavier labour of clearing new fields, but today the demands of contract labour are such that few are able to help.(3) Before the rains begin in early September, women prepare the fields for planting. If a new plot is to be used, it is first cleared with a small hatchet. Tree stumps are left two or three feet high; after the field has been cultivated for a year or two and the tree-stumps have dried and rotted, they are burned off and cleared away. When the rainy season has set in and the ground is thoroughly wet, the main corn-fields are planted. The ground is dug with a hoe and ridged slightly, the ridges following the contour of the land, so that the rain will not wash away the soil, and so that the moisture will be held. Occasionally irrigation is used, small channels being led from hillside streams to the gardens. Maize is dropped by hand on the ridges, and the seeds covered with the foot. Beans and squash are planted with the corn. In January there is usually a break in the rains, and this is the time when the bean crop ripens. (This is a critical period, since if the dry spell lasts too long the corn crop is blighted, but if it is too short the beans will not ripen.) The vines are pulled up and put in the field hut to dry. Later the beans are beaten out of the pods and stored. 241 [462] [312]

In each field there is a grass hut, which is used as a shelter from showers, as a place for drying beans or corn, and as living quarters when the corn is sprouting. (When a woman decides that it would be more convenient to live by her field, which requires constant guarding against birds, she may live in her field hut with her children for several weeks.) 241 343 ●

As the dry season commences, the corn crop ripens. When it is ripe, it is plucked, dried and shelled, and stored in the *osila*, a granary on posts, for future use. One *osila* is used for each household. When required, the corn is hulled and pounded into the meal which forms the staple food.(4) [257] [252]

(1) Hambly pp.129-32, and illustrations; Childs, personal communication.
(2) Cushman, 1944, pp.72-8; Hambly, (2) 1934, pp.146-8, and Childs, personal communication. (3) Childs, personal communication.
(4) For a good description of the preparation of corn-meal, see Cushman, pp.77-8.

Ngendo is surrounded by a stick palisade except on that side of the headman's household which is adjacent to the rocks used as a club-house. The village itself (and each section) is divided up into compounds, each of which contains one to three houses,(1) and palisades divide one compound from the next; between are paths leading to the *ocila* and out of the village. Small gardens for tobacco, maize and beans are within the compounds, and the larger fields lie outside the village at from thirty minutes' to an hour's walk. In the headman's section of Ngendo there are 25 households containing 32 houses in all. Each house has its own granary *(osila)* and a small chicken-coop built on stilts, and of all the houses only six have separate kitchens *(ociwo)*. Most households had separate pens for pigs, goats and sheep for the night,(2) and at one side of the headman's compound there is a common corral for the nine cattle owned by the section. Only the headman had a spirit-hut *(etambo)*, used also as a storehouse, for entertaining his guests, and for his own use should he wish to sleep apart from his wives.

Chiefs' villages or *olombala* (singular *ombala*) are often surrounded by a belt of tall trees.(3) The chief's compound (the *ilombe*) is larger than those of other villagers, and, according to Hambly,(4) usually contains: the chief's house, which always has a separate sleeping-room; a house and a kitchen for each of his wives; a tomb for the burial of the chief and his wives; a house of meditation for the chief, and pens for pigs and chickens.

Umbundu houses are usually circular, but sometimes rectangular, and made of wattle and daub, with thatched roofs. Sometimes huts are divided by matting into a living-room and a sleeping-room. Cooking is often done in the house itself, but sometimes a separate hut is built as a kitchen.(5)

The *onjongo* (the Men's Club House) consists of a cone-shaped roof set on stout hardwood poles instead of a wall, and left open so that those for whom there may be no place inside may still see and hear what takes place within.(6)

Villages are moved when fields are exhausted and others are not available nearby(7) or, more often, when there has been illness or death in the village, which implies that some action displeasing to the spirits has been committed. (No information is available concerning the usual length of life of a village.) When the new site is chosen, the headman's fire in the old village is extinguished, and a procession starts, led by a boy carrying the sacred bows *(ohonji)* of each ascendant who is now a guardian spirit of the family (i.e. the *olusi*), and a girl carrying the sacred chest *(ocimbangu)* containing the relics *(ociye)* and the balls of iguana skin.(8) On arriving at the site the boy and girl cut and plant the

(1) In this section there were 13 goats, 20 sheep, 100 pigs and about 100 chickens. (Childs, op.cit. p.31)
(2) Ibid.
(3) Hambly, (2) 1934, p.206 *et.al.* It was a custom of the Ngangela peoples to plant trees round the village and dedicate them to deceased chiefs. (See McCulloch 1950, p.68.) There is no evidence that the trees surrounding Umbundu villages have any ritual significance, although the custom may have been taken over from the conquered Ngangela peoples.
(4) Op.cit., p.208.
(5) Ibid., p.10
(6) Childs, personal communication.
(7) Due often to European settlement.
(8) See below, p.47.

824 *Okalalululka.* This tree has leaves which are used in treating a skin disease.
813 *Uvendangulure.* This small tree, only three feet in height, gives straight twigs which are used in making arrow shafts.

FOOD SUPPLY

COLLECTING AND HUNTING

222 462 Collecting of natural products which serve as food substances is chiefly in the hands of women and children, though an exception has to be made in the instance of honey, which is gathered by men and boys.

Boys diligently search for nests, noting their location so as to be able to visit them again when the fledglings are large enough to serve as food. Large numbers of women and children may be seen 252 gathering caterpillars in gourds. The insides of the caterpillars are 222 squeezed into boiling water to make soup.

When a cloud of locusts appears, as in 1925, the creatures are gathered. They are sometimes fried, or they may be boiled in water, dried, and preserved with salt in earthenware pots.

A number of miscellaneous items of the food supply were mentioned in connection with names of trees whose fruits are gathered.

223 [411] Boys engaged in food-gathering usually carry small bows and blunt wooden arrows (*ocilavi*). One type of bird arrow is fixed to the bowstring. The forward end of the arrow is split so that it may contain small stones that are ejected when the string is released. From the wild fig tree mucilage is obtained and this is boiled until it forms a thick paste which is smeared on the boughs of trees. [231] Some of the small birds captured in this way are eaten, others are kept in wicker cages made by children.

343 171 In all parts of Angola large cylindrical beehives may be seen fixed high in the trees (Plate XC, Fig. 2). Two types of hive have been noted in particular. In the Elende district a hive is made by opposing two half cylinders of wood each about three feet long, so forming a hive which has a diameter of one foot. The ends are covered, with the exception of a small round hole. The whole structure is bound round with grass which is kept in position by lashings of bark. In the neighborhood of Cassanga a difference in the structure of the hives was noticed. This type of hive is made from a cylinder of strong reddish bark, the edges of which are fastened together with stout wooden pegs. The dimensions are the same as for the hive used in Elende, but the hive of bark is uncovered.

231 In the Elende district honey of wild bees is removed from the hives in the months of August and December. One man ascend-

[see pp. 138-140, category 116]

226 462 spear eight feet long, the end of which consisted of ten sharp prongs of palm stem (Plate LXXIII, Fig. 1).

[171] Near Cangamba in eastern Angola, fishing in the Kwando River occupied numerous men and women of the mixed tribes in the district, namely, Vachokue, Luchazi, and Babunda. Men paddled into midstream in small bark canoes from which fishing operations were directed. The fishermen carried small conical string nets, which were attached to stakes in such a way that the openings of the nets faced upstream. Vachokue women, working in pairs, dragged baskets against the current (Plate LXXXV, Figs. 1, 2).

AGRICULTURE AND COOKING

343 243 *Osila* is the Umbundu word for the granary which stands on wooden supports (Plate XLIV, Fig. 1); this *osila* is for the restricted family, and there is one *osila* for every house. The Ovimbundu store their corn in bulk, but in the Esele country I noted that the cobs themselves were carefully packed. Each Ocimbundu girl cultivates a small patch of ground, the produce of which she is at liberty to sell in order to buy brass ornaments, beads, and palm oil. [432]

241 In addition to maize, barley, oats, and wheat, with here and there a little rye, are occasionally grown. There are three colors of beans, red, white, and black. There is no attempt to keep the varieties separate, so they cross-fertilize freely. The Ovimbundu try to cultivate a surplus of beans and maize which they use to pay their taxes to the Portuguese, likewise to sell at the stores of traders. [651] [438]

252 512 Corn is pounded on the rock which has been used for generations after it has been consecrated by sprinkling the blood of a chicken. Pounding begins as early as five o'clock in the morning, before sunrise, and from that time to sunset the pounding-rock is in use. The rock is evidently regarded as a meeting place for social intercourse; it is undoubtedly the center of village gossip so far as the women are concerned (Plate XXXVI, Fig. 2). [521]

As corn alone is considered a poor food, it is sprinkled on boiling water to which beans are added. Cooking goes on from early morning to sunset over a slow fire. Children sometimes receive as their evening meal a thick plastic cake of mushed corn to which green leaves of a squash are added.

252 There are five kinds of manioc resembling one another in general appearance, but the Ovimbundu distinguish the plants, and reserve for each what they consider to be appropriate preparation. The method varies for sweet and bitter varieties of manioc.

312 bananas, but one could not say that irrigation is generally practised even when circumstances permit.

245 The papaya and the banana are increasingly cultivated, but they are by no means generally distributed. Here and there I [249] have seen a little sugar-cane cultivated by natives for their own [244] use. Near the main railway natives may be seen selling their products, which include cabbages and tomatoes. Some natives are today planting the guava tree which yields sweet palatable fruits. The fruits *olosia* are collected from the *usia* tree. When ripe, the fruit is yellow, round, and about two inches in diameter. These fruits are gathered in September, and the kernels, which are about the size of walnuts, are eaten uncooked. No fruits are collected for storage. *Olombula* fruits ripen in October, when they are eaten raw.

264 Each wife sends the food which she has cooked in her own kitchen to the *onjango* ("council house"). After carrying the food to this house of assembly, where the men meet each evening, the women return to their houses to eat alone, or with the young children.

343 When there is a plurality of wives each has her own house and 252 kitchen. Ngonga states that separate kitchens built outside the [595] living houses are becoming more rare. The poor have their kitchens in the living room because they cannot provide separate structures for living and cooking.

264 The first meal is taken between five and six o'clock in the morning, 262 the most usual food being meal sprinkled on boiling water to form 252 a paste which is eaten with sweet potatoes. A mush of beans is eaten at night; generally there is no meal at midday. Three pounds of cooked beans are eaten by a person for one meal. Over the cooking pots leaves are placed to keep in the steam, especially when the pot contains sweet potatoes. I have made a meal from the sticky, gluey paste which results from sprinkling meal on boiling water. The chief objection to this food is the unpleasant quantity of grit in the meal, owing to the fact that it is pounded on the rocks. Manioc and sugar-cane are chewed at irregular intervals of the day.

262 The amount of meat consumed by the Ovimbundu is small in comparison with the quantity of vegetable food used. This adoption of diet of a particular kind is largely a matter of habit, and there is no good reason why meat should not form a larger proportion of the food supply. The Ovimbundu do not kill their cattle for food though they will eat the meat of oxen which have died from natural causes.

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

(Plate XLV, Fig. 2). The house of bows for holding sacred relics will be described in connection with religion (Plate XLVI, Fig. 1).

In former days there used to be a hard mud floor for dancing, centrally placed in the village.

In the center of the village is the communal house where all men, and boys over four years of age, gather to eat their food, which is sent by the women. This *onjango* is the place of assembly for discussion of village affairs. A house of this kind at Bailundu is circular in form with a diameter of seventeen feet (Plate XLVIII, Fig. 1). In the middle of the *onjango* are stones forming a fireplace. In another such house there were jawbones of oxen. These were suspended from the walls as tokens of the payment of fines. There is no communal house for females. In some villages there is a common kraal for cattle.

The king's compound usually contains:

(1) The king's house, which invariably has a separate sleeping room.

(2) A house and kitchen for each of his wives.

(3) A tomb for the burial of kings and their wives.

(4) The house of bows for staffs, bows, mats, and tobacco-pipes of dead chiefs.

(5) A house of meditation for the king (Plate LXXXIX, Fig. 1).

(6) Pens for pigs and chickens.

The guest houses (Plate XLVIII, Fig. 2) that I have seen were not in the king's compound. Granaries, which are conspicuous in every village, have been mentioned in connection with food supply (Plate XLIV, Fig. 1). Each house has its own granary. I have noticed garbage pits containing corn husks and refuse from sweet potatoes, but there is as a rule no organized scheme for disposing of refuse; dogs and pigs are the scavengers. There is no particular place for defecation; people use the bush.

Every man has a knowledge of house-building. Women do not actually build, but, along with the children, they pour water into the clay pit and carry clay to the men who are plastering the walls. Ngonga says, "People would be surprised to see a woman building a house. They would call her a he-woman." Men help one another in house-building by giving reciprocal service for which there is a gift of food and beer.

A deep rectangular clay pit is made as close to the house as possible, and the children thoroughly enjoy puddling the clay with their

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[p.394]

1

2

BUILDING CONSTRUCTION, OVIMBUNDU, BLENDE

Fig. 1. Maize bin. Fig. 2. Framework of house

S. Hambly E-S (1928-1930) 1994 FP13 Mbundu FP13

[424]

1

2

STORAGE OF MAIZE, VARTANYAMA, SOUTH ANDHRA
Fig. 1. Crude basket. Fig. 2. Shelter for basket.

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[illegible]

EAST-CENTRAL ANGOLA

Fig. 1. Woman of Vimanguilla, Cuanyama. Fig. 2. Ovahimba, Ovambokavelai

FIELDIANA: ANTHROPOLOGY, VOLUME 30 (1928-1960) 1954 E-G Hamby